

**New York Office**  
40 Rector Street, 5th Floor  
New York, NY 10006-1738  
T 212.965.2200  
F 212.226.7592

[www.naacpldf.org](http://www.naacpldf.org)



**Washington, D.C. Office**  
1444 Eye Street, NW, 10th Floor  
Washington, D.C. 20005

T 202.682.1300  
F 202.682.1312

**For Immediate Release December 27, 2016**

## **Statement of NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund on arrest of Jacqueline Craig by the Fort Worth Police Department:**

Cell phone video emerged last week showing a white Fort Worth, Texas police officer violently arresting an unarmed African-American woman, Jacqueline Craig. In a cruel twist of irony, Ms. Craig initially placed a call to police for assistance after her young son was allegedly choked by a neighbor. Instead of engaging in responsible community policing, the officer instead chose to violate his duties as a public safety officer and violently escalated a civilian encounter.

The officers' misconduct was compounded by the inadequate response of local officials. The Fort Worth Police and city leaders downplayed and minimized the assault of an African-American woman as "rude" and an "isolated incident." Further, these statements were made before the completion of any internal or external investigation. The city has also refused to release the name of the officer involved.

"As our nation continues to bear witness to brutal images of African-American men, women, and children being terrorized by police violence, the Mayor and Police Chief's minimization of this incident is another demonstration of the political abandonment of communities who disproportionately are the victims of violent police encounters," said Janai Nelson, Associate-Director Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

As bystander videos continue to stream images of excessive use of force by police against people of color, the actions of the Fort Worth Police are the latest evidence of the entrenched and systemic dysfunction in police departments across the country. Without real accountability from within police departments, state agencies, or federal authorities, many officers remain undeterred and unmoved by lessons from past incidents. The viral video clearly depicting the Fort Worth officer's violent assault and arrest of an African-American family that reached out to police for protection and assistance has rightly sparked outrage and further erodes public confidence in law enforcement.

"Ms. Craig's experience is tragically far from isolated," continued Nelson. "Police violence against women of color in particular is all too common, yet it continues to be [underreported](#)." Ms. Craig's experience bears stark similarities to other incidents of police using domination and violence to intimidate women of color. A recent dash cam video [captured](#) a woman in Austin, TX, being violently arrested after a routine traffic stop. In Waller County, TX, Sandra Bland died under mysterious circumstances in a jail cell. Cell phone video also captured a bikini-clad girl at [a pool party in McKinney, TX](#), being viciously thrown to the ground by an out-of-control police officer and another young woman being body slammed in her own classroom in Columbia, SC. And of course, there was the [young woman in Hagerstown, MD](#), who also called the police for assistance only to find herself the victim of a traumatic assault on her person and dignity. These incidents and many others demonstrate a pattern of extreme and unchecked aggression against women and girls by police.

The [statement](#) released by the Fort Worth Police Department (FWPD) describes a "close and cooperative relationship" with the Fort Worth community based on "transparency, mutual trust and respect." However, the Department's response does not meet this standard. We join with the Fort Worth community leaders who have called for the immediate termination of the officer involved in this incident and for an expeditious and transparent investigation. If the investigation verifies what the footage shows, charges should be brought against this officer for assault and excessive use of force. We also call for the FWPD to immediately release the officer's name and disciplinary record, the incident report relating to this encounter, and all body and dash-camera footage so the public can evaluate the facts with full and accurate information. Finally, any pending charges against Ms. Craig and her two daughters should be immediately dropped.

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored*

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*People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*